

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PM-05 MCE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00
COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SS-15
INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /058 W
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O 151524Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1299

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 4766

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, MASS, GT
SUBJ: GUATEMALAN REQUEST FOR TEAR GAS

REF: A. STATE 205895 B. GUATEMALA 4723

1. DURING CALL ON PRESIDENT LUCAS AUGUST 14 (OTHER ASPECTS REPORTED SEPTTEL), HE REITERATED REQUEST FOR TEAR GAS MADE EARLIER TO ME BY VICE PRESIDENT VILLAGRAN KRAMER (REF B). PROMPTED BY MY HAVING NOTED THE SENSITIVITY TO HUMAN RIGHTS REFLECTED IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS, LUCAS SAID HE SUPPOSED HE WOULD BECOME TARGET OF HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM WHEN POLICE FIND IT NECESSARY TO RESORT TO CLUBS AND ULTIMATELY FIREARMS TO DISBAND UNAUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATIONS AND STRIKES BECAUSE TEAR GAS HAD RUN OUT. GROUPS OPPOSED TO HIM LED BY A FEW "OUTSIDE AGITATORS" (HE SPECIFIED UNIVERSITY TYPES AT ONE POINT) WERE BENT ON CREATING PROVOCATIONS AND MARTYRS. HE HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT ANARCHY. THE LAWS MUST BE ENFORCED, HE SAID, AND "LIBERTY SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH LICENSE."

2. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD HIS POSITION BUT NOTED THAT TEAR GAS WAS AN ESPECIALLY DELICATE ITEM FOR US. THE PRESIDENT LAMENTED THAT NOT ONLY DID THE UNITED STATES REFUSE TO SELL GUATEMALA TEAR GAS BUT IT ALSO PREVENTED "OTHER COUNTRIES" (--HE NAMED ONLY ISRAEL--) FROM DOING SO. HE SEEMED UNCONVINCED WHEN I
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ASSURED HIM WE HAD NOT PUT PRESSURE ON ANY OTHER COUNTRIES WITH REGARD TO SALE TO GUATEMALA OF TEAR GAS OR, CONTRARY TO ACCUSATIONS DURING THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION, OTHER KINDS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. HE COMMENTED THAT THE "BLOCKADE" WAS NOT COMPLETE SINCE GOG COULD LOCATE SUPPLIES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFICKERS BUT COST WOULD BE EXHORBITANT. HE ALSO SAID GOG HAD SOME "VOMIT GAS" WHICH IT WOULD RATHER NOT

EMPLOY BECAUSE OF ITS PARTICULAR NASTINESS.

3. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF TEAR GAS AND THAT, ON BASIS OF OUR CONVERSATION, I WOULD AGAIN RAISE WITH WASHINGTON TO SEE IF WE COULD MEET HIS REQUEST.

4. APART FROM WHAT SEEMS TO ME ENTIRELY LEGITIMATE MERITS OF GUATEMALA'S REQUEST, ARGUMENTS FOR WHICH I SPELLED OUT IN GUATEMALA'S 4723, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT REQUEST HAS ALMOST FORTUITOUSLY TAKEN ON SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT AND THEY MAY READ MORE INTO OUR RESPONSE IN TERMS OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THEIR NEW GOVERNMENT THAN SUCH A ROUTINE MATTER WOULD ORDINARILY JUSTIFY. FOR BOTH THESE REASONS I STRONGLY URGE ITS APPROVAL.

5. WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED STATE'S 205895 AND WILL REPLY SEPARATELY.
BOSTER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, INCAPACITATING AGENTS
Control Number: n/a
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Draft Date: 15 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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